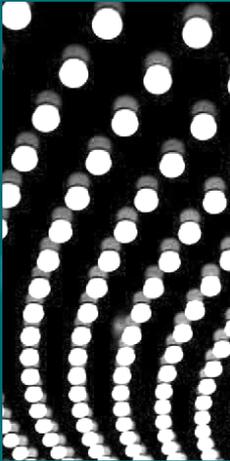


Department of Visual and Media Arts

# Spring 2021 Calendar



## bright lights film series

Web: [emerson.edu/brightlights](http://emerson.edu/brightlights)

 /BrightLightsEmerson

 @BrightLightFilm

 BrightLightsEmerson



All screenings are free  
and open to the public  
and start at 7:00 pm.



**Thursday, January 28**

## 9to5: The Story of a Movement

**W SJ POC**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Boston Asian American Film Festival, and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Julia Reichert and Steven Bognar, documentary, English, 89 minutes, USA, 2020

This is a special screening in partnership with ITVS. Screenings will take place at 7:00 pm on Wednesday, the 27th, and at 6:30 pm on Thursday, the 28th. See our website for more information on how to access.

In the early 1970s, a group of secretaries in Boston decided that they had suffered in silence long enough. They started fighting back, creating a movement to force changes in their workplaces. This movement became national and is a largely forgotten story of US 20th century history. It encapsulates a unique intersection of the women's movement with the labor movement. The awareness these secretaries brought to bear on women's work reverberates even today. Clericals were the low-wage workers of their era. America now confronts the growing reality of deep income inequality. The stories and strategies of these bold, creative women resonate in contemporary America. Discussion with protagonists Ellen Cassedy and Mary Jung to follow. [CC](#)

Gender and sexuality justice and economic justice



**Thursday, February 4**

## The Big Scary "S" Word

**W SJ POC**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, SEIU Local 888, and Boston Jewish Film

Directed by Yael Bridge, documentary, English, 82 minutes, USA, 2020

A former Marine and a public school teacher in two different states find themselves broke and unable to sustain their livelihoods through their jobs. Activated by the energy of the 2016 Sanders presidential campaign and the murmurs of a state-wide teacher strike, both turn to socialism, a once-fringe ideology, to tackle problems larger than themselves. *The Big Scary "S" Word* delves into the rich history of the American socialist movement and journeys with the people striving to build a socialist future today. With inequality growing, a climate catastrophe looming, and right-wing extremism ascending around the world, many Americans are wondering whether capitalism is to blame. Discussion with director Yael Bridge and protagonists to follow. [CC](#)



Economic justice, racial justice, and environmental justice

**Thursday, February 11**

## Landfall

**W SJ POC EC**

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, the Roxbury International Film Festival, *Living on Earth* Podcast, and the Boston Latino International Film Festival

Directed by Cecilia Aldarondo, documentary, English and Spanish with English subtitles, 91 minutes, USA, 2020

Through shard-like glimpses of everyday life in post-Hurricane María Puerto Rico, *Landfall* is a cautionary tale for our times. Set against the backdrop of protests that toppled the US colony's governor in 2019, the film offers a prismatic portrait of collective trauma and resistance. While the devastation of María attracted a great deal of media coverage, the world has paid far less attention to the storm that preceded it: a \$72 billion debt crisis crippling Puerto Rico well before the winds and waters hit. *Landfall* examines the kinship of these two storms—one environmental, the other economic—juxtaposing competing utopian visions of recovery. Featuring intimate encounters with Puerto Ricans as well as the newcomers flooding the island, *Landfall* reflects on a question of contemporary global relevance: when the world falls apart, who do we become? Discussion with producer Ines Hofmann Kanna '96. [CC](#)

Racial justice, environmental justice, and economic justice



**Thursday, February 18**

## Welcome to Chechnya

**LGBTQ** **I** **SJ**

Gender and sexuality justice and immigration justice

Co-presented with *Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival*

Directed by David France, documentary, English and Russian and Chechen with English subtitles, 107 minutes, USA, 2020

With searing urgency, *Welcome to Chechnya* shadows a group of activists who risk unimaginable peril to confront the ongoing anti-LGBTQ pogrom raging in the repressive and closed Russian republic. Since 2017, Chechnya's tyrannical leader, Ramzan Kadyrov, has waged a depraved operation to "cleanse the blood" of LGBTQ Chechens, overseeing a government-directed campaign to detain, torture, and execute them. With no help from the Kremlin and only faint global condemnation, activists take matters into their own hands. In his new documentary, David France uses a remarkable approach to anonymity to expose this atrocity and to tell the story of an extraordinary group of people confronting evil. Discussion with director David France and producer Alice Henty to follow. **CC**



**Thursday, February 25**

## Coded Bias

**W** **SJ** **POC**

Co-presented with the Roxbury International Film Festival, SEIU Local 888, the Boston Women's Film Festival, Student Leadership and Engagement, and Intercultural Student Affairs

Directed by Shalini Kantayya, documentary, English, 90 minutes, USA, 2020

Modern society sits at the intersection of two crucial questions: What does it mean when artificial intelligence (AI) increasingly governs our liberties? And what are the consequences for the people AI is biased against? When MIT Media Lab researcher Joy Buolamwini discovers that most facial-recognition software does not accurately identify darker-skinned faces and the faces of women, she delves into an investigation of widespread bias in algorithms. As it turns out, AI is not neutral, and women are leading the charge to ensure our civil rights are protected. Discussion with director Shalini Kantayya to follow. **CC**

Racial justice and gender and sexuality justice



**Thursday, March 4**

## Duty Free

**POC** **SJ**

## Key

**W** Directed by women

**POC** Directed by or featuring people of color

**EC** Emerson College community

**D** Dealing with disability issues

**I** International cinema

**LGBTQ** Dealing with LGBTQ issues

**SJ** Social justice cinema



**A note on accessibility:** All Bright Lights films and discussions will include closed captioning for the deaf and hard of hearing, which can be enabled on our streaming platform. All introductions and trailers will have open captions, which will appear for all viewers. We will also have audio description for films as indicated.

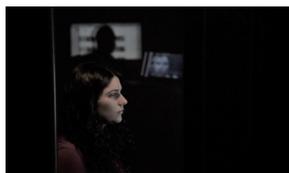
The Bright Lights Film Series implemented an advisory in Fall 2019 to notify our community about potentially disturbing content. This information will be made available for those who seek it out at [websites.emerson.edu/brightlights/content-advisory](https://websites.emerson.edu/brightlights/content-advisory).

**Co-presented with the Roxbury International Film Festival and SEIU Local 888**

**Directed by Sian-Pierre Regis, documentary, English, 73 minutes, USA, 2020**

After a 75-year-old mother gets fired from her job, her son takes her on a bucket-list adventure to reclaim her life. As she struggles to find work, he documents a journey that uncovers the betrayals plaguing her past and the economic insecurity soon to shape not only her future, but also that of an entire generation. Discussion with director Sian-Pierre Regis and protagonist Rebecca Danigelis to follow. **CC**

**Gender and sexuality justice and economic justice**



**Thursday, March 11**

## **The Viewing Booth**

**I SJ**

**Co-presented with Boston Jewish Film**

**Directed by Ra'anán Alexandrowicz, documentary, English and Arabic and Hebrew with English subtitles, 70 minutes, USA and Israel, 2019**

*The Viewing Booth* recounts a unique encounter between a filmmaker and a viewer—exploring the way meaning is attributed to nonfiction images in today's day and age. In a lab-like location, Maia Levy, a young Jewish American woman, watches videos portraying life in the occupied West Bank, while verbalizing her thoughts and feelings in real time. Maia is an

enthusiastic supporter of Israel, and the images in the videos, depicting Palestinian life under Israeli military rule, contradict some of her deep-seated beliefs. Empathy, anger, embarrassment, innate biases, and healthy curiosity all play out before our eyes as we watch her watch the images created by the Occupation. As Maia navigates and negotiates the images, which threaten her worldview, she also reflects on the way she sees them. Her candid and immediate reactions form a one-of-a-kind cinematic testimony to the psychology of the viewer in the digital era. Discussion with director Ra'anán Alexandrowicz to follow. **CC**

**Racial justice**



**Thursday, March 18**

## **Morgana**

**SJ W D LGBTQ I**

**Co-presented with ReelAbilities Boston, Wicked Queer: The Boston LGBT Film Festival, the Boston Women's Film Festival, and the Boston Underground Film Festival**

**Directed by Josie Hess and Isabel Peppard, documentary, English, 71 minutes, Australia, 2019**

*Morgana* is an artistic character portrait of a 50-year-old housewife who re-invents herself as a sex-positive feminist porn star. After 20 years as a dutiful housewife stuck in a loveless, sexless marriage, Morgana has had enough of her dreary life. Desperately lonely and starved of intimacy, she books a male escort for one last hurrah before ending it all.

Her final night takes an unexpected turn when her relationship with the escort opens up a new world of personal and sexual freedom. After hearing about a competition for first-time erotic filmmakers, Morgana directs and stars in a film about her own story, *Duty-Bound*. Unexpectedly, her film wins, catapulting her into the international feminist porn community. Life merges with art as Morgana uses erotic filmmaking as a tool for creative catharsis, while struggling with demons from her past. Discussion with directors Josie Hess and Isabel Peppard to follow. *This film includes explicit sexual content.* **CC**

**Gender and sexuality justice and mental health and disability justice**



**Thursday, March 25**

## **Crutch**

**W POC D SJ**

**Co-presented with ReelAbilities Boston, the Boston Underground Film Festival, and the Boston Women's Film Festival**

**Directed by Sachi Cunningham and Chandler Evans, documentary, English, 98 minutes, USA, 2020**

Two decades of exclusive access, plus a lifetime of archival footage, depict Shannon from his early years to his rise as an award-winning dancer and cutting-edge performance artist whose work finds outlet at prestigious venues worldwide. *Crutch* examines Shannon's controversial street performances as he exposes the hidden world of assumptions disabled people

encounter in public on a daily basis. While the film questions his early exploitation of strangers' good Samaritan impulses, it also marvels at Shannon's ability to create solutions and empower others to navigate similar challenges. *Crutch* is an emotional story of an artist's struggle to be understood, from childhood "cripple" to international provocateur. Discussion with directors Sacchi Cunningham and Chandler Evans, protagonist Bill Shannon, and Dance Umbrella co-founder Jeremy Alliger '75 to follow. [CC](#) [AD](#))

Mental health and disability justice



Thursday, April 1

## The New Corporation: The Unfortunate Necessary Sequel

[W](#) [SJ](#)

Co-presented with the Boston Women's Film Festival, *Living on Earth* Podcast, and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Joel Bakan and Jennifer Abbott, documentary, English, 105 minutes, Canada, 2020

*The New Corporation: The Unfortunately Necessary Sequel* reveals how the corporate takeover of society is being justified by the sly rebranding of corporations as socially conscious entities. From gatherings of corporate elites in Davos to climate change and spiraling inequality and from the rise of ultra-right leaders to COVID-19 and racial injustice, the film looks at corporations' devastating power. Countering this is a groundswell of

resistance worldwide as people take to the streets in pursuit of justice and the planet's future. In the face of inequality, climate change, and the hollowing out of democracy, *The New Corporation* is a cry for social justice, deeper democracy, and transformative solutions. Discussion with directors Joel Bakan and Jennifer Abbott to follow. [CC](#)

Racial justice, environmental justice, and economic justice



Thursday, April 8

## Her Socialist Smile

[D](#) [SJ](#) [EC](#)

Co-presented with ReelAbilities Boston and SEIU Local 888

Directed by John Gianvito, documentary, English, 93 minutes, USA, 2020

In his new film, John Gianvito meditates on a particular moment in early 20th-century history: when Helen Keller began speaking out passionately on behalf of progressive causes. Beginning in 1913, when, at age 32, Keller gave her first public talk before a general audience, *Her Socialist Smile* is constructed of onscreen text taken from Keller's speeches, impressionistic images of nature, and newly recorded voiceover by poet Carolyn Forché. The film is a rousing reminder that Keller's undaunted activism for labor rights, pacifism, and women's suffrage was philosophically inseparable from her battles for the rights of the disabled.

Discussion with director and VMA professor John Gianvito to follow. [CC](#)

Gender and sexuality justice, economic justice, and mental health and disability justice



Thursday, April 15

## Generation Green New Deal (Work-in-progress screening)

[SJ](#)

Co-presented with Boston Jewish Film, *Living on Earth* Podcast, and SEIU Local 888

Directed by Sam Eilertsen, documentary, English, 45 minutes, USA, 2020

For decades, the American political system has seemed incapable of taking on climate change at the scale necessary to address the growing crisis. In November 2018, the youth-led organization Sunrise Movement and the youngest Congresswoman-elect in history, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, occupied Nancy Pelosi's office. Their demand: a "Green New Deal." It set off a firestorm, birthing both an ascendent political movement and intense opposition. *Generation Green New Deal* looks at the revolutionary political idea and the people behind it, featuring Naomi Klein, Bill McKibben, Varshini Prakash, Rhiana Gunn-Wright, David Wallace-Wells, Abdul El-Sayed, and more. Panel discussion with director Sam Eilertsen and activists to follow. [CC](#)

Environmental justice and economic justice



# bright lights film series

The Bright Lights series will be taking place in a virtual Bright Family Screening room space for the spring semester. These screenings will be available for a 25-hour window followed by a live 45-minute moderated discussion. There will be an opportunity for the audience to participate and submit questions. We will be screening 12 films with a focus on social justice, including films dealing with racial, economic, environmental, mental health and disability, gender and sexuality, and immigration justice. I hope you will join us for these crucial conversations.

The Bright Lights Film Series is sponsored by the Department of Visual and Media Arts at Emerson College. The mission of the series is to create community through cinema and welcomes both Emerson faculty, students, and staff as well as the general public. Bright Lights seeks to create an environment where cinema is not only viewed and appreciated but where a dialogue is fostered and a community of media makers, academics, and aficionados are engaged and supported. The series is committed to screening at least 50 percent of films directed by women and crafting a diverse program including BIPOC filmmakers, queer cinema, and films dealing with disability.

Screenings will be available for a 25-hour window beginning at 7:00 pm EST on Wednesdays and the conversations will occur at 8:00 pm EST on Thursdays during the semester, with the exception of our season opener. Please refer to the film description for instructions. Sessions are always free and open to the public, and attendance is capped at 175. This series is curated and managed by the director of programming, Anna Feder.

Contact: Anna Feder  
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